

THE HERALD.

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THE HERALD.

Pittsford Report on Education.

By Messrs. Fay, Drury, Murray, and Tracy.
At the last March meeting held in Pittsford, a committee was appointed to enquire into the state of education, and to report on the subject to the following meeting. The committee met and discussed the subject several times, and finally agreed on the following report, which I, as Secretary, was directed to request you to publish in your respective papers, viz: the Herald, Statesman, Telegraph, and Chronicle, together with the names of the committee. Your compliance with this request will oblige your subscribers in this town, and may probably be of service to the interests of education elsewhere.
T. H. P.
Pittsford, Feb. 4, 1839.

The Committee appointed by the Town of Pittsford, in Town Meeting assembled, to inquire into the best means of Equalizing, Extending, and Improving the state of Education, beg leave to present, as the result of their deliberations the following

REPORT.

Your Committee deem it unnecessary to offer any argument to prove the inefficiency and inequality of the present system of public Education. Its inadequacy to meet the demands of the present enlightened period, and the unequal manner of distributing the funds for its support, are, we believe, universally acknowledged. But, as some difference of opinion exists as to the extent to which the public supervision of education should be carried, perhaps a few plain and candid observations on this subject may remove some misapprehensions or prejudices, which might otherwise be an obstruction in the way of reform.

Your Committee, then, would premise, that they can, not only do the right, but the duty and interest of every free community to provide such an education for the whole people, as shall fit them for the correct and useful performance both of their public and private duties. That this may be distinctly seen, they proceed to show, that the right and duty is one of a paramount nature, viz: that of self preservation; while the economy of the measure will demonstrate that the pecuniary interest, both of the public and of individuals, will be best promoted by a liberal system of public instruction.

It is well known to every reader of history, that the spirit which the United States are now trying, whether it be possible permanently to sustain a perfect free system of government, is not the first attempt of the kind. Greece, Rome, Holland, France, Switzerland, England the small Italian States, and the fine cities of Germany, have successively formed, and endeavored to sustain, a government based on the perfect freedom and equality of their citizens. And where are all these democracies now? All have perished, and given way to governments, which, instead of being calculated to promote the interests of the people, have been contrived to cause the multitude to toil and sweat for the gratification of the pampered few. Kings and nobles have now the entire sway, where the whole people were once as free as we are. And what was the cause of this fatal catastrophe? How come the people again to bow their necks to the yoke, after having once secured their freedom? The story is soon told. They were strong enough to conquer their liberty, they lacked intelligence to preserve it. Mired by ambitious demagogues, they indulged in measures of insubordination and violence. Instead of submitting to the mild sway of laws of their own framing, the concentrated will of the whole people, they accustomed themselves to take the law into their own hands, whenever they were excited by their prejudices or their passions, till at length the general insecurity of life and property rendered the very name of liberty an abomination, and all parties were glad to exchange freedom and insecurity for despotism and safety. Liberty, anarchy, despotism! Such has been the uniform course of every attempt to establish freedom and equality in the old world; and are we, let us ask, are we, who enjoy the most perfect state of liberty that ever existed upon earth, are we in no danger of falling into this downward course? Are there no symptoms among us of the dreadful excesses that have uniformly led to despotism elsewhere? Look at the devastations of the mobs in Baltimore, Philadelphia, New York, Boston, Providence, Utica, Vicksburg and Alton. Look at the South-west generally, where the knife and the pistol drench the streets with blood at noon-day, and say whether our institutions are really in no danger; whether every friend to liberty should not consider himself bound to look out in time for the cause and cure of such enormities. There are, there can be but two methods of putting an end to these growing evils: the government must either be strengthened by military power (or in other words, we must pass the way for despotism); or public sentiment must be purified and enlightened by such a system of education for the whole people as will enable them to see clearly the true interests of the republic; to judge correctly of public men and public measures; and thus, by rendering them proof against the arts of ambitious demagogues, free our country from the destructive evils of party violence. Can any American citizen hesitate for a moment in his choice of such alternatives?

It would appear, that if there be any force in what has been offered, that free governments have two species of danger to provide for: internal and external foes. Which of these is the more dangerous; whether foreign conquest or internal dissension is more to be feared, is a question hardly admitting of a doubtful decision. And yet how do our legislators act? While millions are annually lavished on the army and navy, how grudgingly, how parsimoniously are funds voted out for the all-important object of enlightening the community?

But we have asserted, that the pecuniary interests, both of the State and of individuals, would be best promoted by a liberal expenditure in public education. The sum expended in fortifications and ships of war makes no return but in safety from foreign enemies. In every other respect it is a dead loss; or worse, for discharged soldiers and sailors do not make the most valuable citizens. But money properly vested in education, not only effects its purpose of insuring safety to a free State, but is highly productive in many other respects. "Sowing seed," says an eminent writer, "does not always produce a golden harvest; but knowledge and virtue, when early implanted in the human breast, seldom fail to make ample returns of prudence and felicity."

Our winds and angry billows wreck our learning? Our thieves and midnight robbers steal our learning? Our rot and mildew perish all our learning?

Can learning be consumed by fire? or locked For ages in the limbo of the law? Is learning in the stocks? Can it be spent By prodigals? Can learning ever lose Its master like a dog? Pray, be content; Learning is surest of the gifts we have.

To these questions of the poet may be added the important consideration, that an improvement in public education is as desirable as it is profitable. When once introduced, it is fixed for ever; or, at least, it can never give place but to one still more valuable. For education never goes backward. No parent will consent that his child shall have an education inferior to that he has himself received. The smallest advance, then, is of infinite worth. It entails a property on our children not merely for themselves, but for all their posterity, even to the latest generation.

It may, perhaps, be objected, that, though education may be beneficial to those on whom it is conferred, yet the tax for its support is unequal and oppressive, much as it falls as heavy on the childless as on those who have large families to educate. In answer to this we would observe, that inequality is an objection that may be urged against every species of taxation. But surely it applies with less force to this, than to a tax for any other purpose whatsoever. Where is property so valuable, other circumstances being equal, as in a land of schools and colleges? What boot would tempt one of our farmers to remove from a neighborhood of virtue and intelligence, into one of ignorance and vice? Besides, who would think of grumbling against a tax for the support of our free institutions?

But the fact is, that a thorough improvement of our schools, such a one as would provide a good moral and intellectual education for the whole people, whatever sum it might cost, would, in a very few years, produce an actual saving of taxes to the community. Let the expense of jails, penitentiaries, prosecutions, loss of time by jurors and witnesses be calculated, and let it be remembered, that the statistics of state prisons fully prove, that vice and crime mainly arise from the want of a sound education, and it will appear that the school tax paid by the childless is not without pecuniary returns even to them.

Nor is this all. One of the heaviest of our taxes is that for the support of the poor, who may be said in fact to hold a mortgage upon all our property, both real and personal. Now, who would not desire to lighten or remove such an encumbrance?—and who can for a moment doubt, that this heavy tax would be essentially reduced if all our citizens were educated as they should be? At best, nine-tenths of our community consist of farmers, mechanics and manufacturers, who depend for their subsistence on manual labor, and who, consequently, are liable, in a moment, by apparently the most trifling accident, to be reduced from a state of independence to pauperism. How frequently does it happen that a worthy citizen becomes a burthen to his friends, or to the community, by the loss of a limb, or even a more trifling casualty? But if all received a good education, this serious result would be almost entirely avoided. For, when one source of subsistence was closed, another would open. The profession of teacher is alone sufficient to employ all the crippled in the Union.

Having thus shown that the duty of self preservation renders it incumbent on every free State to provide a thorough education for all its youth, and, independently of its value as a bulwark for our republican institutions, and a means of promoting individual wealth and happiness, that true economy would dictate its support, as a better and cheaper mode of mitigating and diminishing crime and pauperism, than the erection of jails, penitentiaries and poor houses, your committee would next inquire into the best means of rendering our present system of public instruction efficient and impartial in its administration.

We hold it to be a sound principle, that the State should interfere as little as possible in the affairs of individuals; and, if a good education could be provided for all, by the unaided efforts of their parents, we should be among the first who would say to the legislature, "Let us alone!" But all experience proves this to be impracticable; that, without a system of public instruction, the great mass of the people will ever remain in gross ignorance, a situation imperiously calling for the restraining hand of a strong government, a state of things we have no wish to see in these United States. We are, and always have been, advocates of a strong government, but not in the sense in which the words are here used. We would have our government strong in the affection of the people, not in a perfect police, nor in a military force. We consider, then, the true policy of the State to consist merely in enforcing such regulations, and affording such pecuniary assistance as shall aid and stimulate parents to the performance of this duty, and leave them without excuse for its neglect.

But, whatever may be the arrangement for carrying it into effect, the system should be thorough, viz: it should be one which will render the whole people intelligent readers, and capable jurors and voters. Half-way measures are alike extravagant and ruinous. If 10,000 men were absolutely necessary for public defence, what name should be given to the policy which should provide 6 or 8000? Let the system of education, then, be one which will really answer the purpose, or the money it costs will be little better than thrown away.

The system should also approach as nearly as possible to equality, that is, every child should have an equal chance for securing a good education. But this can never be effected by the distribution of the school funds equally among the individual youth. For, such is the inequality of population and wealth in different sections, that in one situation one dollar will go farther than five in another. For example: in one of the districts in this town, there are only six families to support the school, and the public money amounts to \$24.50; while in the adjoining district there are thirty families, and the public money amounts to \$108. Now it is evident, that the populous district can more easily support a school without any assistance, than the other with a double share of the public money. Many attempts have been made in the legislature to remedy the inequality of this mode of distribution, but all have proved abortive. Your committee beg leave to propose the two following plans for the consideration of the town, either of which, they believe, will tend to improve the state of education, as well as to equalize its benefits as far as possible.

First Plan. Let the whole town, with the exception of such families as are set off to the adjoining towns, be formed into one district with one Central School, situated in such a convenient situation as may be agreed on,

for the education, in winter, of the elder scholars in the higher branches, managed by a committee of one from each sub-district. Let the present existing districts be considered as sub-districts, and a female school be kept, throughout the whole year, in each of the present school houses, for the education of the younger classes; such female schools to be entirely under the control of the inhabitants of the sub-districts in which they are situated. The whole of the public money accruing to the Grand district to make one fund, and to be distributed as follows: Each sub-district shall draw wages for their respective teachers in the following ratio:

When the school averages throughout the year 20 scholars or less,	\$1.50 per week.
From 20 to 30 scholars,	1.25 " "
" 30 to 40 " "	1.50 " "
Above 40 " "	1.75 " "

Every sub-district averaging more than 40 throughout the year to be allowed to have two schools, or two teachers in one school, to be paid as above. The appropriation for the Central School to be such an amount as will make the tax on each scholar therein fifty per cent more than the average of the tax in the sub-district schools for the preceding year. The Central School to be kept open four months every winter, and to be conducted by a thoroughly educated male teacher, with as many female assistants as may be necessary. The teachers' board for the Central School to be directed by the scholars living within a mile of the school house, and the wood to be furnished by those from one to two miles, in addition to the school tax, leaving to those more distant their school tax only. The advantage of having the central school house near would probably induce efforts to build it by subscription from different neighborhoods. When the amount of public money exceeds or falls short of the sum necessary for the above weekly payments, and the amount falling to the Central School, they should be enlarged or contracted at the same rate.

Or, the public money may be divided as follows:

1. Let the scholars of the Central School draw their full proportions of the public money.
2. Let one third of the remainder be equally divided among the schools of the United Districts.
3. Let the rest of the money be divided according to the number of scholars attending each primary school.

Advantages of the First Plan.

These are four-fold: 1. Its tendency to produce better teachers. 2. Its efficiency. 3. Its economy. 4. Its equality.

1. *Its tendency to produce better teachers.* Without good teachers, it is vain to look for good schools. And how can we have good teachers, unless they have encouragement properly to prepare themselves for their arduous and responsible task. In every profession but that of teacher, employment can be had during the whole year; or, if there be a season when business is regularly at a stand, the emoluments are proportionally greater, or, the terms are so arranged that one business can be pursued at one season, and another for the rest of the year. But in New England, excepting in the cities and the large villages, no one can gain even a scanty maintenance by the profession. For the plan of alternating winter and summer schools, renders it impossible for a teacher to gain a living unless the wages should at least be doubled. With male teachers this is comparatively of less importance, for the college vacations are purposely arranged so as to afford a regular supply of students for the winter schools. But the female teachers are thrown out of employment precisely at that season when it is most difficult to procure any other. The unavoidable consequence, then, of this alternating system is, that there is literally no such profession as that of a teacher, and the whole business is thrown into the hands of those who take it up merely for a temporary purpose. One girl, for instance, wishes to attend a boarding-school at a distance, to complete her education; another wants some costly article of dress, which her parents are unwilling or unable to furnish; a third, perhaps, prefers keeping school for a few months to taking care of her father's dairy. Not one depends upon it for subsistence; and very few indeed, expect to attend to it for more than one or two summers. Now what can be expected from inexperienced young girls, who engage in teaching with such views as these? We are told that, however well they may manage for a few months, on a second engagement their attention flags, and the school becomes utterly worthless. Can this be a matter of wonder?

The plan now proposed, it is believed, will afford an effectual remedy for this most serious evil. Our sub-district schools will afford permanent situations for female teachers; and, when we look at the "furies of girls," that flock to Lowell and other manufacturing towns, there cannot be a doubt but that these much more eligible and independent situations will be eagerly sought after, and that the necessary pains will be taken to qualify themselves in every respect for this most important of all professions. Only create a demand, and we shall soon have a steady supply. Our central schools also, which, on account of the universal practice of employing our youth at home in summer can be open only in winter, will be conveniently filled by the students, during their college vacation.

2. *Its efficiency.* Surely no argument is necessary to show the superior efficiency of the plan. It requires but a glance to see, that the younger classes will be highly benefited by a permanent school, and by a teacher educated with a view to that employment, and who will, consequently, devote her whole attention to it; a teacher who will have an opportunity of becoming acquainted with the various dispositions and characters of her pupils, and time to apply that knowledge to their benefit; an advantage which temporary teachers can never possess. The younger classes will also be relieved from the intrusion of the elder scholars in winter, a circumstance which will at least double the efficiency of the school for that season of the year.

In the Central Schools, the higher classes will find well-qualified teachers, and their attention not being distracted by reading and spelling lessons, they will be able to devote themselves exclusively to the higher studies. And these studies can be prosecuted with so much greater ease and effect when uninterrupted by the constantly recurring recitations of the beginners.

3. *Its economy.* On this head it is only necessary to say, that by employing in the towns only one male, with a sufficient number of females, in place of 12 or 14 men as at present, a sufficient saving would be effected to pay the teacher's wages ten months in the year in every sub-district, with a proportionate allowance for the Central School.

4. *Its equality.* At present, the advantages of education are distributed in a manner exceedingly unequal. By the proposed plan, with the exception of college graduates, we should approach as nearly as possible to an equality; and, what is still better, all would be well educated, and at a rate as low as to bring it within the reach of the poorest members of our community.

Having now, as we believe, distinctly shown, that the proposed plan, if generally carried into effect, would quickly produce a better race of teachers, while it would be much more efficient, economical, and equal, than the present system of public instruction, allow us to offer a few general observations to those especially interested.

To those who live in the more populous districts, and who have hitherto enjoyed an abundant share of the public money, we would say, we trust you will cheerfully adopt a plan, which, at the same time that it highly improves your own schools, enables you to perform an act of justice and kindness to your less favored neighbors, by extending the benefits of a good education over the whole town. To your patriotism and disinterestedness we freely trust the decision.

To those who live in the more sparsely settled districts, where the public funds, in place of running a full stream, have hitherto fallen but in scanty drops, we would say, we depend on you for our firm adherents. The legislature has hitherto turned a deaf ear to your wants and rights. But now, when your more fortunate neighbors are both able and willing to place your children on an equal footing with their own, we have a firm reliance that you will not turn away and refuse the offered boon, without at least giving the subject a thorough examination.

It is true, your children will labor under one disadvantage, from which those residing in or near the centre of the town, will be free from, viz: the distance from the Central School. But surely this is not to be compared to the disadvantages under which they now labor. And we may depend upon it, that the young people will contrive some means of obviating it. It should be recollected, that it is by no means necessary for scholars in the higher branches to spend all day in school. Home study, with an hour in school for recitation and explanation, is amply sufficient. Such is the uniform practice in colleges, and in the best high schools. In fact, it scarcely admits of a doubt, that an hour a day three times a week for recitation at school, if the leisure time was well spent at home, would be of more advantage to the pupil, than spending 5 or 6 hours every day as now practiced. Such an arrangement would, in most cases, produce habits of patient perseverance, and confidence in one's own exertions, habits of much more importance than the mere attainment of science. In all schools there is too much leaning on the teacher; too little self dependence and patient study. And surely there could be no difficulty in fitting up a team for each neighborhood, which might be furnished by turns by the different families, while those who had none might pay their proportion by one or two days labor. Should there be any delicate females, what should hinder them from boarding themselves in one of the rooms of the school house, appropriated and fixed for that purpose. The additional expense would merely be the transportation of the necessaries from home, and this would be fully compensated by the freedom from the charge of wood for the school, and heard for the teacher, which, it will be recollected, is to be paid by those living near the school. This mode of providing their own board is becoming very popular in the colleges and high schools, where it averages about 50 cents per week where every thing is bought. Your committee cannot recommend the plan of boarding the scholars in the neighboring families. The grand object of the Central School system is to put every child on an equal footing, an object which would be completely frustrated by connecting with it an increase of expense, or on any pretext interfering with the performance of their daily domestic duties by the boys. Let, however, a fair trial be made, and the committee feel confident, as they have before said, that the young folks would find a way of removing the only obstacle between them and a good education.

To all we would suggest the propriety of giving the plan a careful and candid examination. We ought not to expect perfection in all its parts. Perfection does not comport with the nature of things here below. All we should look for is a clearly preponderating balance of good. No plan can possibly be devised to which some objection will not arise. It is not the part of prudence to shut our eyes to all the advantages of a scheme, and eagerly to seize on and magnify all its defects. True wisdom would dictate an examination of the present system and the proposed plan on all sides, and if the advantages of the latter should appear greatly to preponderate, to give it a fair and a sufficient trial. Nor should it be hastily abandoned, even when unexpected difficulties occur. New machines will not work as smoothly as old ones. A little patience will frequently obviate difficulties at first considered unsurmountable.

Second Plan.—Should the first plan be thought too large a scale, your committee would propose, as the second plan, the same Central School System, but within more confined limits, viz: by dividing the town into two, three or four districts, with one central winter school for each, and the same permanent female sub-district schools as described in the first plan. Should two districts be preferred, Otter Creek might be the dividing line; if four districts, there might be two on each side of the Creek. Both plans stand on equal footing as to efficiency, and the production of good female teachers. But the first is very much superior in economy and equality. In fact, it is the only way in which, under the present law, any approach can be made to equality. If the town was divided into two or more districts, the sub-district schools west of Otter Creek could not receive more than half the amount, while those on the east side would not receive more than would fall to them under the first plan. Still, your committee have no hesitation in saying, that either plan would be a manifest and lasting improvement. By the first, every child would be placed very nearly on an equal footing, and the education of all would be thorough. By the latter, the education of all would be improved, though a very sensible inequality would still exist in different sections of the town, an evil much to be deplored.

In conclusion, your committee would offer the following resolution for the consideration of next March meeting: Resolved, That the Select Men be directed to unite all those districts that may pass a vote for such union, in their respective legal school meetings, by a majority of not less than three fourths of legal voters present,

and that the proof of such vote be a certificate of the respective district clerks, addressed to the Select Men.

THOS. H. PALMER, Secretary.
Amos Crenin, Amos Hinchcock, A. G. Dana, T. F. Bogue, N. D. Clifford, Jeffrey Barnes, Wm. Beale, Jos. Warner, John W. Newell, Gerson Hennes, D. Richardson, D. Hall, Jr., Abner Owen, Committee.

ADVENTURE.—A few days since, as one of our citizens was out with his gun in quest of game, he came upon a hollow tree with an aperture at the bottom, and thinking that perhaps it might be the habitation of some "vermin," he placed his head at the hole with a view to ascertain. At the same moment it seems that an occupant was also reconnoitering from the inside, and thrust his nose directly in the face of our friend without; who, not a little frightened at so abrupt a salutation, drew back a few paces and discharged his rifle into the head of the intruder, which turned out to be a bear of some 200 lbs weight! After dispatching his majesty, the man cut the tree and found two fine fat cubs, which he secured and brought in triumph to town.—*Michigan Sun.*

PARTY STUPIDITY.—A Mr. Morris introduced a proposition in the Missouri Legislature on a bank charter that the bank should not redeem any of its \$20 notes when the likeness of Jackson, Van Buren, Fremont, or Fillmore, was cut off or defaced. A warm debate ensued, which resulted in the withdrawal of the absurd proposition. It would have been a capital provision for the bank, which would have laid low bills to redeem.—*Newark Ad.*

"Why don't you resume specie payments?" says Gov. McNeill to the Brandon Bank. "Pay me the \$15,000 that you owe me, and I will resume tomorrow," responds the bank to his lucid exclamation.—*Louisville Jour.*

ANTIQUITY OF DISGRACE.—He called a bad singer Mr. Cook; being asked the reason, he said, "his notes are the signal for a general rising."

A hypocritical anecdote described over his door. Let nothing evil enter here," Diogenes wrote under it, "thy what door does the owner come in?"

Seeing a wicked boy throwing stones at the gallows, he observed, "Well aimed, boy! you will hit that mark at last!"

Being asked what was the best hour for dinner, he replied, "for the rich, when they please; for the poor, when they can."

Seeing a scolding wife who had hanged herself on an olive tree, he exclaimed, "O that all trees would bear such fruit!"

Being asked by a student of natural history, what was the worst beast, he replied, "of the wild, a slanderer; of the tame, a flatterer."

Seeing the son of a courtier throwing stones at a crowd, he called out, "Take care, boy, lest you hit your father!"

Hearing a handsome youth speak foolishly, he exclaimed, what a shame to see a leaden sword drawn from an ivory scabbard!"

Seeing an unskilful archer shooting, he went and sat down by the target, declaring it the only place of safety.—*N. Y. Lib. Gaz.*

FAITH AND WISDOM.—A worthy son of the church in the West Highlands, who had peculiar opinions touching the "fall assurance of faith," having occasion to cross a ferry, avoided himself of the opportunity to interrogate the boatman as to the grounds of his belief, assuring him if he had faith he was certain of a blessed immortality. The man of our said he had always entertained a different notion of the subject, and begged to give an illustration of his opinion. "Let us suppose," said the ferryman, "that one of these oars is called faith and the other works, and try their several merits." "Accordingly," throwing down one oar in the boat, he proceeded to pull the other with all his strength, upon which the boat turned round and made no way.—Now, and he, you perceive faith won't do, let us try if works can." Seizing the other oar, and giving it the sanctified the consequence ensued.—"Woe!" said he, "you see don't do either; let us try them together." This result was successful, the boat went through the waves, and soon reached the wished for haven. "This," said the honest ferryman in the way by which I hope to be waded over the troubled waters of this world to the peaceful shore of immortality."

BECKWITH'S CURE.—If any lady about 80 years of age will try the following receipt, and let us know when the latter is ready, we will pass judgment on it in person. Being an epicure in the article we should like to try it. To three parts of lukewarm beer mixed with a better, add one tea spoon full of carbonate of soda, dissolved in five minims; just apply the carbonate, stir the better well, and then put in the acid—thus the use of soda is entirely superseded, cakes as light as a feather are secured. One great advantage is, that a batter is ready for baking as soon as it is made.

MYSTERY.—A mysterious affair happened at Springfield, Mass., on the 13th ult., which has excited considerable excitement there. A young man named Wm. L. Hyman, recently from Brookline in this county, was very sick, and during the night of the 13th, being left for a short time by his wife, disappeared from his room, partially dressed and has not since been seen or heard of. Ephraim H. Mason Esq., of Brookline, has been to Springfield on behalf of his friends, and informs us that search has been made, and a legal investigation had, but nothing has transpired to lead to his discovery.—As usual, a thousand stories are in circulation; and various ways are suggested for accounting for his disappearance. The probability is, that on a fit of despondency he either committed suicide or has wandered to some distance, and perished from cold and hunger.—*Brattleboro' Press.*

A Painsful Building.—The New York City Almshouse and Hospital establishment contains 1500, and the Penitentiary 722 inmates. They consume eight tons of flour daily, and the whole expense of supporting them is seven hundred dollars.

Progress of Humanity.—It is proposed in the Legislature of Michigan to abolish capital.